

THE ECONOMIC INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY.*

THIS valuable work is strongly marked alike by the excellencies and the defects with which all readers of Prof. Rogers' writings are familiar. It deals with a field of investigation which he has made almost entirely his own, and of which he over and over again tells his hearers—for the treatise is in the form of lectures—that he has still a monopoly. Slipshod in his English to an almost incredible extent, and far more dogmatic in his assertions of economic theories than many of the great writers whose dogmatism he denounces, he yet succeeds in making his treatment of his great subject at once instructive and entertaining to a degree that only those who have given the matter some previous attention can fully appreciate, though all who take any interest in English history will find that he throws a great deal of light on episodes previously obscure if not inexplicable. It is the fashion of the day to speak of the "historical method" in relation to economic science, as in relation to many other sciences. In this connection the expression is ambiguous, meaning sometimes research into past economic conditions of society, at others research into past economic opinions or theories. In the former of these senses Mr. Rogers' work may be characterized as one of the most important contributions ever made to the literature of the subject. It embodies the results of many years of minute investigation carried on over a field far wider than that covered by his well known "Six Centuries of Work and Wages." One cannot help feeling a strong conviction that he is right in giving a quite new version of some occurrences which have been conventionally treated for generations by superficial historians, and that still greater results will before long be produced by the new band of investigators for whom he has so conspicuously and successfully set the example. In short, what Freeman, Gardiner and Stubbs, following in the path marked out by Hallam, have accomplished by researches into the English constitution and institutions, he has equalled by his researches into the industrial, commercial and fiscal condition of England during the early centuries of her national existence.

No reader of Mr. Rogers' previous works needs to be told that on some prominent economic doctrines he is at variance with the older economists, from Adam Smith to John Stuart Mill. On some of the same doctrines he is equally at variance with more recent writers, like Henry C. Carey and Henry George. Take, for instance, the theory of "rent." Mr. George accepts implicitly the Ricardian definition of rent with its immediate cause the lowering of the margin of cultivation. Mr. Rogers describes Ricardo's theory as "partly a truism, partly a fallacy," and declares that "its acceptance as a sufficient analysis of rent is one of the peculiar hindrances which obstruct the way when we have to solve a present difficulty of no common magnitude." He goes on to claim that he is "the only person who has examined rents historically," and, speaking of Mr. George's proposed confiscation of "rent," he adds: "It is not a little remarkable that a theory which assigns a providential origin of rent should be pressed into the service of the theorist who wishes to annul it; while the inference which I draw from the facts of the case is that it would be not only a blunder and an injustice, but an amazing folly, to accept Mr. George's conclusion." Readers of Mr. Rogers' writings will not be surprised to learn that the kind of "rent" Mr. George proposes to confiscate is not at all the kind of "rent" the confiscation of which Mr. Rogers denounces as a blunder, an injustice and an amazing folly. It is not necessary to express here any opinion as to the merits of Mr. George's remedy for unfair distribution of the products of the industrial community, but at all events Mr. Rogers' historical account of "rent" furnishes no refutation of the arguments by which he supports it.

One of the most interesting and useful parts of this work is the lecture devoted to "Legislation on Labour." All readers of English history know something about the attempts made by the English Parliament to regulate by statute the wages that should be paid to labourers, but few have any adequate conception of the extent to which this tyrannical interference with the operation of the ordinary law of supply and demand was carried. The number of Labour Acts passed was in all thirty-seven, and the last of them was not swept from the statute book till 1825. Mr. Rogers makes it perfectly clear that the early statutes were almost entirely inoperative on account of the scarcity of labourers which resulted from the "Black Death," but, strange to say, he does not see that the fact of this failure shows that his refutation of the wage fund theory is far from satisfactory. The same failure militates equally against Mr. George's conclusions on the same subject, though he is just as blind to the fact as Mr. Rogers is. It would do those who denounce the workingmen for their efforts to better their position by means of unions, and even strikes, a world of good to learn how completely the labouring class of England were able to hold their own during the fifteenth century until the Tudor laws, and especially the great Labour Act passed by Elizabeth's Parliament in 1563, crushed them into virtual servitude. From that condition they are still trying to free themselves, and if the means they resort to are annoying to employers, they are certainly not unnatural in view of the means resorted to by generations of employers to reduce them to subjection and helplessness.

* *The Economic Interpretation of History* (Lectures delivered in Worcester College Hall, Oxford, 1887-8), by James E. Thorold Rogers. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons; London: T. Fisher Unwin; Toronto: Williamson & Co.; 1888.

Mr. Rogers is a member of the British House of Commons, and an advanced Radical in politics. He was excluded from Oxford for many years on account of his political opinions, and in this volume he makes no attempt to conceal them. He is thoroughly and robustly independent, fearless in his pursuit of truth, and frank in his statement of what he finds. The spirit in which he carries on his investigations leaves little to be desired, and the defects of forms are trifles compared with the value of what he has done.

HISTORY OF THE BANK OF ENGLAND.*

THE Bank of England is unique among the financial institutions of the world. No two nations have precisely the same banking system, but the system adopted in England differs much more from the systems of most other countries than they differ from each other, and the Bank of England is its most prominent feature. A complete history of the Bank of England means a complete financial history of England from 1694 to the present time, and as this could not possibly be compressed into one moderately sized volume, the sub-title of the present work is rather misleading. The history is a very good one for all that, and any one who desires to get a succinct statement of the origin, development, and present condition of the Bank of England will get it here. The latter part of the volume is of course much more instructive than the earlier part of it, inasmuch as the history of the Bank since 1842 has been much more important than all its previous history taken together. Peel's Bank Act of 1844, which was more the work of Lord Overstone than of Peel, was the great turning point in its development, and the most important feature of the Act was the separation effected between the Banking and the Issue Departments. The nature of this famous piece of legislation is well described by Mr. Francis, who is, to all appearance, in sympathy with its tendencies, and he is equally effective in dealing with the effect of the Act of 1844 on the Management of the Bank of England and its internal working. The book contains much curious and interesting information about minor matters that historians are too apt to overlook, such as the personal character and achievements of Patterson, the founder of the Bank; the appearance and material of the notes; the kind of business done in the Banking Department, and the nature of the precautions taken; the number, occupation, and treatment of the employees; the location, appearance, and extent of the buildings, etc. All these things, and many others, go to make the work more useful, as well as more entertaining, than it would otherwise be.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

THE FORESTERS' CONCERT.

ONE of the largest audiences of the season was gathered at the Pavilion on Thursday evening last, on the occasion of the annual concert of the combined city Courts of the Canadian Order of Foresters. The programme, which had been prepared, was largely presented by local talent, with the addition of Miss Maud Morgan, the harpist, from New York, and Mr. S. E. Walt, a tenor from Boston. In speaking of Mrs. Frank Mackelcan and Master George Fox, both of Hamilton, as being local, I have no disposition to forecast the possible annexation of that ambitious little city. Mrs. Mackelcan's frequent appearance in Toronto, and her evident popularity here, as well as the great success achieved by young Fox, certainly incline me to feel a pride of ownership in these talented people. The local contingent taking part were Mdle. Adèle Strauss, Mr. E. W. Schuch, Mr. James Fax, Mr. H. L. Clark. Mdle. Strauss' singing surpassed all her previous efforts, and her rendering of the *Aria*, from *La Clemenza di Tito* was a rare instance of good vocalisation, correct style, and a strong dramatic tendency. Mr. Schuch's fine sea song, "The Skipper," was sung with that bluff jollity which is his characteristic, and won a warm recall. Mr. Herbert Clark's cornet solos were universally admired, and musicians had a treat in his playing of Sullivan's "Lost Chord." Mr. James Fax, always popular in Toronto, found in the audience a house full of sympathetic spirits who cheered his efforts to the echo. Mrs. Mackelcan, no doubt inspired by the large assemblage, sang with that spirit and feeling which is so frequently found in this gifted lady, and in her duet with Mdle. Strauss the two ladies gave us indeed a "concourse of sweet sounds." Young Fox is a distinct success; he has a fine, broad, clear tone, almost inexhaustible technical resources, and above all, an unsophisticated taste. What faults he shows are those only of youth and inexperience, and not those of temperament and bad training, nor of viciously directed taste. The words, while correctly descriptive, are cold, for I have rarely been so moved to admiration by honest effort entirely free from all meretricious adjuncts as I have been by the playing of this lad. Study, honest continuous practice, and the hearing of what is great and good in music, would open up for him a future brilliant beyond the most sanguine hopes of himself and his friends, nearly all of which he owes to his faithful teacher, Mr. Baumann. The tenors that come to Toronto from Boston do not seem to have been very fortunate lately, in their own excellence, or in that of the impression they created on arriving here, and Mr. Walt was no exception to this rule; Miss Maud Morgan, on the other hand, gave us a

* *History of the Bank of England*. By Joseph Hume Francis. Chicago: Euclid Printing and Publishing Company, 1888. Toronto: George Virtue.

most delightful performance on that rare instrument, the harp. Her classic appearance and her flowing draperies completed with her instrument, an æsthetic picture rarely seen, to which must be added the influence exerted by her wonderful playing, and the strength and continuity of tone she draws from her harp, both as a novelty and for the excellence of her performance. She made herself a favourite with the audience, and will, no doubt, soon be called upon to re-visit us. A notice of this concert would be incomplete without mentioning the excellent and most judicious accompaniments played by Mr. D. J. O'Brien, of Hamilton.

SHE.

THOSE who went to the Grand Opera House on Monday evening expecting to see a dramatic performance in which they should feel the nervous hand of fascination and expectant terror holding them as fast as did that of Mr. Rider Haggard, in his celebrated book, will have been disappointed, for whatever the spectacular and scenic excellencies of *She* are, its dramatic value, as produced in Mr. Gillette's version, is small; its dramatic strength lies rather in its many thrilling situations, than in the cunning value of its plot. The gesture and lurid flash of lightning with which *She* quietly wipes out of existence all who oppose her, makes, in itself, an incident that, despite its horror, the spectator longs for and blames the author if it does not come often enough. Everybody expected to see five or six savages hot-potted, and could this amusement of the "Ama Haggard" have been introduced into the drama, it would draw far beyond the capacity of the house. Being spared this exciting incident, we have to content ourselves with feeding on the horrors and magnificence of the underground palace of *She*, and with the realism of the well of fire. *She* herself, as represented by Miss Telula Evans, when viewed closely, appeared as if the effort of living two thousand years had tired her somewhat and made her just a trifle scraggy, though her first appearance impresses you with a recognition of a certain degree of beauty. Miss Evans is a fair actress and a passable singer. The music by Fuerst is commonplace, and the chorus has frequent difficulty in reaching its highest points, sometimes to the utter discomfiture of all sense of correct intonation. In other respects the chorus looks passably well, and dances passably well. A hero could never be made of "Leo Vincey," whose vacillating disposition prevents his characteristics from being admired, and while Mr. W. S. Harkins looked quite a hero, his playing was in places sufficiently weak to agree with the character represented. The best piece of work in the play was that of the character which did not belong to it, the typical American drummer being used for this purpose. The scenery and general mounting, and many of the costumes, make *She* one of the most gorgeous spectacles ever presented in Toronto.

THE authorities of the Metropolitan Opera House have been showing a most laudable example, by paying royalties to Mme. Wagner on all the performances of Wagner's operas taking place in that building, although not bound by law to do so.

M. CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS, the great organist of the Church of the Madeleine, Paris, will next season make a tour of America, giving organ recitals in the principal cities.

I THINK Rider Haggard must have had Maggie Mitchell in his mind when he wrote *She*. This lady has been on the stage for fifty years, twenty-eight of which she has played *Fauchon*, *the Cricket*.

THE *American Musician*, in speaking of the recent quarterly Conservatory Concert, pays a deserved compliment to Sig. D'Auria and his vocal pupils.

THEODORE WACHTEL, the Nestor of German tenors, on the 12th inst. celebrated the fortieth anniversary of his début on the operatic stage.

MR. BARRINGTON FOOTE, the popular baritone, again sang for Mr. Charles Harriss at the Church of St. James the Apostle, Montreal, on Sunday, Feb. 24, before an overwhelming congregation. His selections were taken from the oratorio "Elijah," all of which were given in a truly magnificent manner.

MR. FREDERICK ARCHER, the well-known organist, who is going to settle in Milwaukee, declares that he finds a more general musical intelligence in the West than in the East, and that "the ripe musical knowledge of the people in Manitoba is simply amazing."

A DRUM CORPS tournament will shortly be held in Boston. That is a good idea. Why should not a band and drum corps tournament be held in Toronto this summer? These entertainments pay in small places, and with the impetus given to the popularity of band music by the enterprise of Mr. Bayley, they should be able to produce satisfactory results in Toronto.

HARRIET AVERY, the popular mezzo-soprano of the late Kellogg Opera Company, who recently married Edgar Strakosch, will join McCaull's Opera Company this season to take the place of Laura Moore, who will be the prima donna of the Francis Wilson Opera Company.

AFTER her recent fiasco at Vienna, Mme. Pauline Lucca has been persuaded to favour America with a tour of forty concerts, which is to be her last farewell to the public. It is now exactly thirty years since Lucca made her début, at the age of eighteen, as "Elvira," in *I Puritani* at Olmutz.

B. NATURAL.